Mr. *Foxcroft's* Sermon

ON THE

Beginning of *New-England* &c.

BRITISH MUSEUM

OBSERVATIONS

Hiſtorical and Practical

ON THE

Riſe and *Primitive State*

OF

NEW-ENGLAND.

With a ſpecial Reference

TO

The OLD or firſt gather'd Church in *Boſton.*

A SERMON preach'd to the ſaid Congregation *Aug.* 23. 1730. Being the laſt Sabbath of the firſt CENTURY ſince its Settlement.

By THOMAS FOXCROFT, *M. A.*

Pſal. 80. —— *Thou haſt brought a Vine —— and planted it.* —— *Return, we beſeech Thee, O God of Hoſts : Look down from Heaven, and behold, and viſit this Vine.*

BOSTON, N. E.

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M DCC XXX.

To the Old or firſt gather'd CHURCH in BOSTON.

Dear Chriſtian Friends,

AS *I have often review'd with Wonder, ſo I take Leave on the preſent Occaſion thus publickly to mention with Gratitude, the ſignal Conduct of Divine Providence in bringing me at firſt among you, while I was in a manner an utter* Stranger *to you all, and when by reaſon of my* young *Years, and apprehended* Unfitneſs *for ſo important a Station, I could not entertain the leaſt Expectation of ſuch a Preferment. And the uncommon* Unanimity *that (as you may remember) attended your Invitation and Call, was what I have thought a very happy Circumſtance of my Settlement, and do often look back upon with equal Pleaſure and Surprize. This indeed was one peculiar Encouragement I had to give up* my own *Inclinations, which were not to fix in the Miniſtry ſo very early.*

I have Reaſon to admire your Candour toward me, while I have been with many Infirmities ſerving in the Goſpel among you: And I deſire to take a thankful Notice of the Favour of God in continuing us together thus long in ſo much of mutual peace and Satisfaction; now the 14th Year †.

I have ſometimes very anxious Thoughts of Heart upon that of the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 12. 2 I knew a man in Chriſt above fourteen years ago. --- *Happy the Miniſter, happy the Profeſſor, that hath ſuch Aſſurance of his ſaving Union to Chriſt! And happy the People, who have thoſe to teſtify the Goſpel of the Grace of God among them, who are vitally united to Chriſt, and* have the Witneſs in themſelves!

IT *has always been very affecting to me to conſider what* Men of God *they were, in whoſe place I ſucceed. This Church of Chriſt has been diſtinguiſh'd with a Succeſſion of burning and ſhining Lights; Paſtors and Teachers eminent for their Gifts, and no leſs eminent for their Graces and Experience in all the Myſteries of the Divine Life;* Wilſon, Cotton, Norton, Davenport, *&c. Theſe Venerable*

† Feb. 1716,17. By Vote of the Church I enter'd on ſtated Preaching.

Venerable Fathers were in their Day very much New-England's *Strength and Glory; and in each of them this Church enjoy'd a peculiar Treaſure. I have often bluſh'd and been full of Confuſion within my ſelf, from a Conſciouſneſs of my own comparative Nothingneſs: Yet I hope the Reflection has ſometimes been a Help to me in my Work, to direct and animate my Miniſtrations among you.*

I have taken a ſingular Delight in reading the Lives *of my excellent Predeceſſors; ſo many of which we ſee in Print: have often thought I cou'd deſire no better Patterns to copy after; and made it my Heart's Deſire and Prayer to God, That I might by the Grace of Chriſt be principl'd and ſpirited, as they were; that I might have the like Preſence of Chriſt with me, as they had; that the Work they ſo happily began, might not miſcarry in my hands.*

ALAS! *there is among us a viſible* Decline *of Religion in the power and practice of it, and not the ancient Succeſs of Goſpel-Ordinances. Sure I am, It becomes us all, both Miniſters and People, humbly to inquire into the Grounds and Cauſes hereof.*

I readily take to my ſelf my *part of the Blame, as being ſadly ſenſible of many Defects in me, with regard both to thoſe Abilities and Graces, which form the Character, and direct the wiſe and holy Management, that is neceſſary in thoſe that wou'd by their Example, as well as Preaching, win Souls to Chriſt, and* lead the Way *in ſeeking the Kingdom of Heaven. Verily the beſt of us all need merciful Allowances, before we can claim the Character and Reward of good and faithful Servants of Jeſus Chriſt. O for the Application of the Blood of Sprinkling, that I may be made accepted in the* BELOVED! *And for the Supply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, that I may watch in all things and make full Proof of my Miniſtry! I earneſtly ask the Help of your fervent Prayers for me (as alſo for my worthy Brother and Collegue) that the Sins of my Miniſtry may be done away by the Blood of Chriſt, and that the Succeſs of it may be ſecured by his powerful Bleſſing: that Chriſt our Maſter may be with us continually, in the Study and in the Pulpit, and in all our Converſation, Viſits, and private Labours among you.*

AND *we beſeech you (Brethren) in the fear of God to conſider what Defects there are on* your *part, that may be a further Obſtruction to the Succeſs of the Goſpel in this once flouriſhing Church. "Let your Miniſters have their*

juſt Share of Cenſure: Nevertheleſs we are perſuaded, you do not think the whole Blame lies at our Doors. Even the SON *of* GOD *himſelf, of whom it was witneſſed, That* never man ſpake *or liv'd* like him; *yet meets with little Succeſs, and finds himſelf conſtrained to throw back Men's juſt Condemnation on their own Heads,* Ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life".

BE *much in ſerious Self-Examination, to know what on your part hinders the Goſpel; and be much in Prayer, and in the Uſe of all proper Methods, that the Power of Godlineſs may be revived among us. Let Goſpel-Truths, Goſpel Order, and Goſpel-Worſhip be precious in your Eyes. Stand faſt in the Liberty, wherewith Chriſt hath made you free: and keep the Ordinances as they have been delivered to you, in their primitive Purity, without ſuffering any Alloy of human Inventions. If ſome from an Antichriſtian Spirit wou'd impoſe upon you in Matters of Religion, remember theſe are ſacred to God and Conſcience;* and be not the Servants of Men. *As we are a ſpiritual Corporation, let us take Care to exerciſe and reverence the holy Diſcipline that Chriſt hath inſtituted; Charitable to receive all viſible Saints, cautious to admit only ſuch, and faithful to expel ſcandalous Sinners from our Communion. Purge out the old Leaven, that ye may be a new Lump. O let the Duty of Brotherly Admonition, ſo much neglected in this Day of Degeneracy, be reſtored to a ſerious and univerſal Practice: and yet let none, under a ſpecious pretence of lamenting others Sins, act the* Buſy-Body, *as the manner of ſome is, whiſpering Things which they ought not; to the prejudice of their Neighbours Reputation, the great Hurt of Religion, and the manifeſt Forfeiture of all Pretenſions to a Spirit of Charity and Brotherly Kindneſs. Watch over one another, for good, and not Evil. Provoke one another to Love and good Works. Exhort one another daily, leſt any of you be hardned through the Deceitfulneſs of Sin. Be not Partakers of other Men's Sins: but by bearing due Teſtimony againſt them, deliver your own Souls. Such as are Heads of Families, O take a religious Care of the Youth committed to your Charge: And Children, ſee that you obey your Parents in the Lord.*

IT's *a day abounding with Temptations, to our young People in ſpecial, to deſert the Intereſt of pure Religion, and betray the Cauſe of God, in which our Forefathers were engag'd. O let us do all we can to fortify and fix*

them.

them, and to recover such as are fallen from their Stedfastness. What greater Joy than to see our Children walking in the Truth! Let us labour their early Conversion to God, and use all possible Means to form them to Virtue, to furnish and dispose them to be active Blessings to their Generation. And thou Solomon, *my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, & serve him with a perfect Heart & with a willing Mind: for the Lord searcheth all Hearts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, tremble lest he cast thee off for ever.*

In *a word, let us glorify God for his signal Appearances in the days of our Forefathers; and consider them as Obligations on us, who reap the happy fruits thereof, to adhere with Steadiness and Zeal to the spiritual and exalted* Ends *of that great Undertaking, which brought them over to* America. *Let us always maintain a peculiar Esteem for the Memory of our pious Progenitors, and train up our Children in the same Veneration: be often telling them of the excellent Character and Spirit of our Forefathers, their Errand into this Wilderness, the Covenant wherein they've bound their Posterity to the Lord, and their many ardent Prayers for succeeding Generations. As we are building on the Foundations they have laid for us, and rejoycing in many desirable Results of their Pains and Prayers, surely it becomes us never to mention their Names but with Distinctions of Respect, as the Fathers of* New-England. *And let us see to it that we act and behave worthily of our noble Descent: Else* this *will turn for a Testimony against us.*

Stand *ye in the Ways, and see, and ask for the old Paths, the good Way, and walk therein: and ye shall find Rest for your Souls. Remember them that have had the Rule over you, who have spoken to you the good Word of God. And be ye Followers of them, who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.*

To *promote these excellent Purposes, is my Aim in the following Discourse: which I now put into your Hand for your serious Perusal, and commend to the Blessing of* God *for the desired Success. Unto* Whom *be Glory from you, & in all the Churches of the Saints, by Christ Jesus, World without end! 'Tis the affectionate Wish of,*

Dearly Beloved,

Your sincere Friend,

And Servant in the Gospel,

T. Foxcroft.

A DISCOURSE
Hiſtorical and *Practical*
ON THE
Beginning of New-England *&c.*

MATTH. XIII. 31, 32.

Another Parable put he forth unto them, ſaying, *The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a Grain of Muſtard-Seed, which a man took and ſowed in his field.*

Which indeed is the leaſt of all ſeeds: but when it is grown, it is the greateſt among herbs, and becometh a Tree: ſo that the Birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

WE may very fitly intitle the Chapter before us a Collection of Parables. No leſs than eight are here recorded; where, in Language borrow'd from Things earthly, our Saviour diſcourſes of Matters ſpiritual and heavenly. This way of teaching by Similitudes

was what the *Jews* had always been accuſtom'd to: and our Lord in the uſe of this Method condeſcended to the Capacity and Genius of the People of that day. His Parables are all the moſt wiſely choſen, to ſerve their reſpective purpoſes. 'Tis both pleaſant and profitable to meditate upon them.

THE ſcope of this Parable of the *Grain of Muſtard-Seed* is to ſhew how the Goſpel-Church (to which the Stile of *the Kingdom of Heaven* is here and often elſewhere given) ſhould from very low and ſmall Beginnings, gradually increaſe and grow, and at length riſe up to an admirable Degree of Strength, Extent and Glory.

THE Text wou'd naturally lead me to diſcourſe of the State of *Chriſtianity* in the Apoſtolick Age; "which appear'd at firſt as a little "inconſiderable *Seed*, but did ſoon ſhoot up, and "grow into a ſtately *Tree*; did like the Tree "of Life in the midſt of the Garden of God, ſpread "its ſalutary Branches far and wide, & has taken "ſo deep and firm a Root, that all the Powers of "Hell, with all their Storms and Underminings, "ſhall never be able to prevail againſt it. —— But tho' ſuch a Diſcourſe might be of excellent Service, it's out of the way of my *preſent Deſign*; which is to bring your Reflections nearer home, and employ them in a brief Recognition of the Primitive State, Beginning and Progreſs of the Kingdom of Chriſt in *this place.*

WHAT determin'd my Thoughts to ſuch a Subject, was a View to that obſervable Circumſtance of the Week now opening to us, That it is the Period of *One HUNDRED* Years ſince the firſt Gathering of this ancient *Church*, and laying the Foundations of Goſpel-Order here, by a ſolemn *Covenant*; which

which ſacred Affair was tranſacted on a day of Faſting and Prayer, *Aug.* 27. 1630. ‡

Now as it has fallen out in the Courſe of our publick reading the Scriptures, that ſo ſutable a Text ſhou'd occur for the preſent Occaſion, I have been ready to interpret this as an Intimation of Providence to me, to take ſome ſpecial Notice of the remarkable Period before us, and lead you into ſome Meditations adapted thereto. The Language of Heaven to us at this day ſeems to be as in Iſa. 51. 1, 2. *Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteouſneſs, ye that ſeek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for I called him alone, and bleſſed him, and increaſed him.* And when I reflect ſeriouſly on the Wonder-working Providence of God, which planted our *Zion* and has eſtabliſh'd it hitherto, I have thought She might very fitly take up the Language of Pſal. 40th. —— *He brought me up*

‡ *It may gratify the Curioſity of ſome, to ſee a* Copy *of that* Covenant, *and it may be uſeful as a ſtanding Monitor to thoſe who are of the Church, to have it in their Hands. 'Tis a brief and comprehenſive Form, in the following Words.* ——

"In the Name of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, and in Obedience to his holy Will and Divine Ordinance,

We whoſe Names are here under written, being by his moſt wiſe and good Providence brought together into this part of *America* in the Bay of *Maſſachuſetts*, and deſirous to unite ourſelves into one Congregation or Church under the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* our Head, in ſuch ſort as becometh all thoſe whom he hath redeemed, and ſanctified to himſelf, DO hereby ſolemnly and religiouſly (as in his moſt holy Preſence) promiſe and bind ourſelves, to walk in all our ways according to the Rule of the Goſpel, and in all ſincere Conformity to his holy Ordinances, and in mutual Love and Reſpect each to other, ſo near as God ſhall give us Grace.

John Winthrop
Thomas Dudley
Iſaac Johnſon
John Wilſon
&c &c.

up out of an horrible Pit, and ſet my Feet upon a Rock: and he hath put a new Song in my Mouth. — Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful Works which thou haſt done, and thy Thoughts to us-ward, they cannot be reckoned up in Order unto thee; if I would declare and ſpeak of them, they are more than can be number'd. A Train of marvellous Operations of Divine Power and Grace prepar'd the Way to the Plantation of the Kingdom of God in this place; and a Succeſſion of illuſtrious Events attended the Progreſs thereof. *O ſing unto the Lord a new Song: He hath made known his ſalvation; his Righteouſneſs hath he openly ſhewed in the ſight of the Heathen: all the Ends of the Earth have ſeen the Salvation of our GOD. One Generation ſhall praiſe thy Works to another: I will ſpeak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and declare thy loving kindneſs, O God, in the midſt of thy Temple. Thy Saints ſhall bleſs thee; they ſhall abundantly utter the Memory of thy great Goodneſs, and ſing aloud of thy Righteouſneſs. My Mouth ſhall ſpeak the Praiſe of the Lord: and let all Fleſh bleſs his holy Name for ever.*

I will not pretend to critically trace the Beginning and Improvement of this Work of God in all its ſeveral ſteps; for that were to write a Volume of Hiſtory: But ſhall only give you the more general Hints, proper to have place in a Sermon, to the End I may excite your Gratitude and encourage your Confidence toward God, the Hope of our Fathers.

Our Text points out the Method I propoſe to my ſelf in treating this Subject, which is ——

1. To call your Thoughts back to the *Original* of this religious Settlement, and ſhew the *Smallneſs* of our Beginning.

2. To conſider the *Means* of its Progreſs and Eſtabliſhment.

3. Mention the extraordinary *Degree* of its Growth, Strength, and Uſefulneſs.

LIKE a Grain of *Muſtard-Seed*, it made but a contemptible and unpromiſing Figure at firſt: but afterward it ſtrangely came on, improv'd & flouriſh'd, until at length it became as a *Tree*, in whoſe extended Branches the Fowl of the Air ſeek for Shade and Repoſe.

I. *I ſhall ſay ſomething as to the* Riſe *and* Occaſion *of this religious Settlement, and make ſome remarks on the* ſmallneſs *of our Beginning.*

IT roſe from little and improbable Beginnings. Tho' afterwards it grew up to a conſiderable Tallneſs, it was in its firſt Principle but fitly reſembled by *a Grain of Muſtard-Seed*, one of the ſmalleſt ſort of Seeds.

IN order to ſearch out the firſt Springs, and *Root* of this Plant of the Lord, it may be of Uſe to premiſe the following hiſtorical Obſervations.

ABOUT two hundred Years ſince, began the Proteſtant *Reformation*; when after a long Night of Popiſh Darkneſs GOD cauſed the Light of the gloriousGoſpel to break forth in many parts of the Chriſtian World, overſpread with thick Clouds of Ignorance, Hereſy, and falſe Worſhip. Several Countries, mov'd by the Spirit of GOD, nobly attempted to throw off the yoke of *Antichriſt*, and deliver themſelves from the Superſtitions and Tyrannies of the *Romiſh* Hierarchy.

BY the grace of GOD ſuch Proſperity attended thoſe glorious Attempts, that in a few years the Reformation made its progreſs thro' a great part of *Europe*. About the year 1526 ſeveral States in *Germany*, that were zealous for the reforming Intereſt, united in a *Proteſtation* againſt the Decrees of a Popiſh Diet; and upon that account the Reformers have ever ſince gone under the Name of *Proteſtants*.

" GERMANY took Fire from *Luther* and *Melancton*: *Switzerland* and *Geneva* from *Zuinglius* and

and *Calvin.* And after them follow'd *England* in the Reign of King *Henry* the eighth, under the Direction of *Cranmer*, *Latimer*, and *Ridley.* — The writings, that defended the Neceſſity of a Reformation in the Church of *Rome*, were greedily embrac'd; the Corruption in Doctrine & Worſhip became intelligible; and the Corruption of Manners, crept into all the ſpiritual Orders, becoming ſcandalous, not one of them had Intereſt to ſtop the Reformation" †.

NEVERTHELESS the Reformation was not in all places carry'd on with equal Zeal, nor to the ſame degree of Perfection. Things were proſecuted to a greater length in ſome places than others, according to the variety of *Motives*, that influenc'd Men in their oppoſition to Popery.

THE caſe of the *Engliſh* Church had ſomething very peculiar in it. For our firſt Reformers were acted by Principles vaſtly different.

ONE Set of Men were govern'd by *Political Views* & ſiniſter Conſiderations. Many were Papiſts in *Diſguiſe*, "who (as one expreſſes it *) when they cou'd no longer reſiſt the prevailing force of the Reformation, conform'd to it in Appearance, ſtill retaining the *Old Leaven*: and theſe, if they cou'd not retain the ſubſtance of Popery, yet endeavour'd to preſerve as much as poſſible of the outward Face and Appearance of it; that ſo a Return might be the more eaſy, and ſeem the more natural" — Others there were, who tho' it was a Joy to them for reaſons of a political Nature, to behold the Power of the See of *Rome* broken, and the Pope diſcarded; yet having, by the Impreſſions of an Education in the midſt of Popiſh Superſtitions, a ſtrong Guſt for Ceremonies, and Love of Pomp in Worſhip, were ſtrenuous Advocates

† Bennet's *Hiſtorical account of the ſeveral Attempts for a further Reformation.*

* Pref. to Abridgment of Bp. *Burnet*'s 3d. Vol. *Hiſt. Reformation.*

vocates for the continuance of many of thoſe ancient Rites & Cuſtoms, they were bred up in the Obſervation of: they hoped by this to recommend themſelves to the eſteem of *Papiſts*, and thought it a moſt probable Method to make an eaſy Conqueſt of them, to remove their Prejudices, and bring over Multitudes of them to a Compliance with the Reformation.

MOREOVER, (as an *Epiſcopal* writer obſerves ‖) "Many at that day were for complying with the Laws, & bearing with ſeveral things which they did not approve of, in hopes of getting them afterwards amended. --- Influenc'd by falſe Notions of Policy, this Circumſtance of Affairs (he adds) kept them from reforming many things which they *diſlik'd*, and alſo (no doubt) from examining more thro'ly into ſeveral other things" ---

'TIS a very good Paragraph that follows, which I beg leave to digreſs ſo far as to repeat to you, from the ſame Hand, ——— "Certainly (ſays he) *our* Reformation, as happy as we are in what we enjoy of it, was never yet perfected; nor ever can be till we all come openly to *acknowledge*, and to *act* conſiſtently with, that *Principle*, which was the only Ground upon which the Reformation did, or could, ſtand; *viz.* That *the Scriptures are the only Rule of Faith to Chriſtians*; and that every Chriſtian, as he is *to anſwer to GOD* for his own Actions, and not others for him, ſo is he to *judge for himſelf*, how he is to act in matters of Religion, and not others to judge for him. Where *this* Principle does not prevail, there (ſays he) *Popery* ſtill remains, tho' it paſs under the name of *Proteſtantiſm*: And till this Principle does prevail, we can expect no *Completion* of that Reformation, which as yet can only be ſaid to have been happily *begun* amongſt US".

‖ *Burnet, ubi ſupra.*

I come now to obſerve, There was in the very Infancy of the Reformation † *another Set* of Men, who were engag'd in the Cauſe ſincerely upon that *great Principle*, and conſider'd things not in a Political View, but a *Scriptural*. They appeal'd *to the Law and to the Teſtimony* : making that their ſollicitous Inquiry, *What ſaith the Scripture ?* They pleaded for the inſpir'd Writings as the alone Standard of Truth in Divine things, and profeſs'd to bring every Opinion and Cuſtom to the Teſt of the HOLY BIBLE. They renounc'd all implicit Credit to human Teachers, and all human Impoſitions in matters of Religion and Divine Worſhip. They aſſerted the Sovereignty of the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, as the ſole Lord of Conſcience ; and took his written Word for the only Canon of their Faith and Practice.

THEY were Enemies to Magnificence and Oſtentation in Worſhip, & to coercive Power & Tyranny in Diſcipline ; as things the Scriptures were abſolute ſtrangers to. " They remembred how theſe things had miniſter'd to the Corruptions, the Superſtitions, and Enormities of Popery : and they tho't it beſt, in conformity to the laudable Example of *Hezekiah*, who brake in pieces the *brazen Serpent* (tho' of divine Appointment) when the People *abus'd* it to Idolatry, to lay aſide human Inventions which had been ſo abus'd ". They thought it the Wiſdom of *Proteſtants*, their Duty and Safety, to reduce every Circumſtance of Diſcipline & Worſhip as

† " In an ancient Book call'd *The Regiſter of memorable Matters touching Reformation* (mention'd by Mr. *Cotton* in his *Way of Congregational Churches cleared*) there is a Story of *an hundred* Perſons, who refuſed the common Liturgy, and the Congregations attending thereunto, and uſed Prayers and Preachings & Sacraments among themſelves ; whereof 14 or 15 were ſent to Priſon. And theſe pleaded their Separation before the Lord-Mayor, Biſhop *Sands*, and other Commiſſioners on *June* 20, in the year 1567.

as nigh as poſſible to their profeſs'd *Rule*; to avoi all Reſemblances of *Popery* as much as might be, an ſo ſettle the wideſt Diſtance between *Proteſtant* an *Papal* Churches; which wou'd be a happy Method to clog any future attempts of a Return to *Romiſh* Fopperies and Uſurpations.

Besides, in the beginning of the Reign of the Popiſh Queen *Mary* (ſo irrecoverably devoted to that cruel Church, which has been often drunk with the Blood of the Saints) when they foreſaw a furious ſtorm of Perſecution coming on, many of the Reformers fled abroad for Safety, and having Opportunity to obſerve the Worſhip and Diſcipline of the *foreign* Proteſtant Churches, they were (not a few of them) *pleas'd* with their Practice; who, they thought, had gone the furtheſt in reviving of primitive Chriſtianity, and reſtoring the Order of the Goſpel. And hence, after their Return home, at the happy Acceſſion of the Proteſtant Queen Elisabeth, which made another Revolution in Religion, and gave new Life to the *Proteſtant* Cauſe, thoſe Men retaining a delightful Remembrance of what they had ſeen in the reform'd Churches abroad, & judging it more ſubſervient to the Intereſt of true Chriſtianity, to ſtudy a Harmony with the foreign Proteſtants, in Worſhip & Diſcipline, as well as in Doctrine, than to Symbolize with their avow'd Adverſaries, the idolatrous Papiſts; they became zealous Contenders for a more perfect Reformation in the Church of *England*: advancing and urging thoſe three great Principles, The Limitation of *Church Power* to Matters of *Divine Commandment*, the Limitation of *Biſhops* to a *particular* Congregation, and the Limitation of *Church-Fellowſhip* to viſible *Saints*. They were for having the Rule of Chriſtianity to be the Rule of Conformity. This is the Party, who were at firſt diſtinguiſh'd by the Name of *Puritans*; afterwards by that of *Nonconformiſts* or *Diſciplinarians*,

rians, and now uſually of *Presbyterians* or *Diſſenters*; the Glory of the Engliſh Reformation.

These good Men, tho' diſſatisfy'd at the imperfect Conſtitution of things, yet conſidering the Neceſſity of the Times, in the beginning, labour'd to ſuppreſs their Reſentments and Complaints as much as poſſible for the preſent, and tarry'd in the Communion of the eſtabliſh'd Church many of them; waiting for better Days, and encouraging a Hope that the Reformation might proceed in due time unto greater Purity. But (as One obſerves *) they that found their ſecular Intereſts accommodated in that Conſtitution, employ'd the Power which they had in their hands, not only to retard the progreſs of the Reformation, but even with innumerable Vexations to haraſs ſuch as were the moſt zealous Friends unto it; to *cenſure*, *fine*, *ſilence*, *deprive*, and *impriſon* thoſe that were diſſatisfy'd and cou'd not conform, being (as is moſt remarkable) Men for the moſt part *of the ſame Spirit and Principle* with thoſe Proteſtants, who ſuffer'd under the Prelates in Queen *Mary*'s Day. For a conſiderable time theſe perſecuted Puritans remain'd very much in Privacy under their Sufferings, waiting ſtill for more of Reformation, or for more of Liberty and Indulgence to conſcientious Diſſenters. But after ſome years of fruitleſs Expectation, Severities being multiply'd upon them, and the increaſing Tyranny of the Eccleſiaſtical Courts deſtroying all Hope of a religious Pacification, it drove many to a more open *Separation* from the Things that were by Law eſtabliſh'd.

A noble Army of *Confeſſors* (martyr'd with ſcandal and oppreſſion, and not able to live in Quiet at home) being conducted by that *Wiſdom*, *which is first*

* Dr. *Cotton Mather* in his *Eleutheria*, or Hiſtory of the Reformation and of Nonconformity.

firſt pure, then peaceable, left their native Country, and ſought Reſt to their Souls abroad. Some retir'd into various parts of *Europe*, and found Comfort in the Boſom of foreign Churches.

OTHERS ſought a Refuge and Covert from the Storm in ſome quiet Receſs of the NEW WORLD. Here they hoped ſtill to enjoy the Freedoms and Privileges of *Engliſh* Government, and to enlarge the Britiſh Dominions: Here they hoped to be the bleſſed Inſtruments of ſpreading the Goſpel of Chriſt among the heathen *Natives*: Here they hop'd to proſecute the Deſign of a *Scriptural* Reformation, according to the Example of the beſt reform'd parts of the Proteſtant World, to form Churches truly evangelical, and to enjoy the ſpiritual Liberties & Bleſſings of the pureſt Church-State under a faithful Miniſtry. In a word, here they hop'd they ſhould be out of the *Reach* of Perſecution, or that their angry Brethren would be *aſham'd* to purſue them in their diſtant Retreats; and that they ſhou'd entail pure Religion, with Liberty of Conſcience, as the goodlieſt Heritage, unto their *Children* in ſucceeding Generations.

UPON ſuch excellent Views, our pious *Anceſtors* tranſplanted themſelves, Families, and Eſtates into theſe remote Regions of *NEW-ENGLAND* †, *a Land that God had eſpied for them*; as it was ſaid in the Caſe of *Iſrael*, when brought up out of *Egypt* into *Canaan*.

LATE in the year 1620, arriv'd the firſt Body of American Reformers, who laid the Foundation of the moſt ancient Church and Colony of *Plymouth* ‡.

EARLY

† "This Land had been for ſome years known by the Name of "the *Northern Plantation*, until King *Charles* the firſt (then "Prince of *Wales*) gave it the Name of *NEW-ENG-*"*LAND*. Dr. I. Mather's *Relation of the firſt Indian Troubles in* N. E.

‡ Morton's *New-England*'s Memorial.

EARLY in the year 1629, arriv'd at *Salem*, the original Settlers of that part of the Country; who ſoon proſecuted their great Intention, in the Voyage, by entring into the Church-State of the Goſpel, and planting a reformed Congregation in that moſt ancient Town of the *Maſſachuſets*.

IN the Summer of 1630. came over divers honourable Perſons †, Miniſters, and worthy Chriſtians: among whom were thoſe Servants of Chriſt, that *founded* the Church-Society, of which *we* are the preſent Members, the moſt ancient Congregation in this Place.

THEY firſt embody'd into Church-Order at *Charlſtown*, under the paſtoral Care of the famous old Mr. *Wilſon*: But not liking their Situation ſo well, the greateſt part (with their excellent Paſtor) very quickly agreed to remove over on this ſide the River, and planted the Town of *Boſton*: Thoſe of the Church, who ſtay'd behind, ſtill retaining their Relation to it, "until *Octob.* 1632; when, thoſe "Members deſiring a Diſmiſſion from the Congre-"gation to enter into a New Church-Body at "*Charlſtown*, and having firſt ſolemnly ſought "unto God, with the Reſt of the Church, for Di-"rection herein, they were accordingly diſmiſſed "upon the 14th day of the ſaid Month ‡. And now upon this Separation, I find the Number of Males in the Church of *Boſton* (after nigh two years continuance here, in which time doubtleſs Additions were made to it) amounted but to about 70 or 80: the Body of the Inhabitants.

YOU ſee, from how minute an Origin hath riſen this great and populous Town; which has ſo many worſhipping Aſſemblies now belonging to it. It was truly

† The Governour and Company of the *Maſſachuſets-Bay*, which had hitherto reſided in *London*, now remov'd to *New-England*, bringing with them the Patent or Charter of the Plantation.

‡ *Old Church* Records.

truly at firſt a *Day of ſmall things* with this People of the Lord, with the Country in general, and with this Town in particular.

As to *Number*, their Beginning was ſmall, and ſo in general as to external *Figure* : which expos'd them to many Fears, and to the Inſults of their Enemies ; who were ready to mock theſe contemptible *New-Englanders*, as *Sanballat* and *Tobiah* did the *Jews* in old time, when attempting to rebuild *Jeruſalem* : The one ſaid, *What do theſe feeble* Jews ? *Will they fortify themſelves ? will they ſacrifice ? will they make an End in a day ?* And the other ſaid, *Even that which they build, if a Fox go up, he ſhall even break down the Stone-wall.* — Yea, *Judah* herſelf ſaid, *The Strength of the Bearers of Burdens is decay'd, and we are not able to build the wall.* Neh. 4. 2, 3, 10.

In like manner our Forefathers were a deſpis'd Handful of Men ; look'd upon with Contempt by proud and haughty Scorners ; and at the ſame time when the Adverſary ſaid, *Let us cauſe the Work to ceaſe*, the Builders themſelves almoſt ſinking under the weight of many Diſcouragements, were ready to ſay, E'en let it fall, we are not able to go thorow with it. They were in a Wilderneſs-Condition ; ſeeing nothing round them but uncultivated Wilds and ſavage Creatures ; diſtant a thouſand Leagues from their native Country, capable of being but little ſerv'd by foreign Amities, and for a while without any Vicinity of chriſtian habitation among themſelves ; enduring various Hardſhips, Wants and Straights ; meeting with ſore Loſſes, grievous Sickneſſes, many Deaths, and lamentable Bereavements of ſome that ſeemed to be Pillars in the Church and Common-wealth.

Innumerable Evils compaſſed them about: They were in perils on every ſide, in perils of Robbers, in perils by their own Countrymen, in perils of the Heathen,

Heathen, in perils by falſe Brethren, in perils in the Sea, and in perils in the Wilderneſs: in Wearineſs and Painfulneſs, in Watchings often, in Hunger and Thirſt, in Faſtings often, in Cold & Nakedneſs.

They dearly purchas'd (with many Tears, Prayers, Mortifications & Self-denials) thoſe happy Goſpel-Privileges and religious Liberties, which too many among us at this day are ſo ready to make light of, and the *Royal Charter* for which was the grand Inducement to our Forefathers, to come over into this Wilderneſs and plant the ſame at their own Charge. They did not aim at a worldly, but ſpiritual Intereſt: Nor had they any temporal Attractives to bring them hither. They cou'd not come (as *Iſrael* of old into *Canaan*) with hopes to enter into other Men's Labours and build on Foundations already laid. No! They came expecting, neither Cities and Houſes prepar'd for their Reception, nor Gardens, Fields, and Orchards for their Entertainment: but a great and terrible Wilderneſs, a Land of Deſerts, and of Pits, and of the ſhadow of Death. Here they expected they muſt (like the Builders of *Jeruſalem*) work with one hand, and hold a Weapon in the other; and looked to get their Bread not only with the Sweat of their Brows, but even with the Peril of their Lives. And it was not without indefatigable Application, much Labour, and great Expence, that they ſubdu'd this deſert Land, for a Dwelling place and Inheritance.

But I proceed now

II. *To make ſome Reflections on the* Growth *and* Progreſs *of this religious Settlement, and the* Means *thereof.*

The little inconſiderable Seed, ſown in this Place, quickly took Root, ſprung up, and grew, increas'd and flouriſh'd, in an admirable and almoſt unexampl'd manner.

The

THE *Country* flouriſh'd, under the Protection of the Royal Charter, a mild and equal Adminiſtration of civil Government, and the Smiles of Heaven, very remarkably; that ſcarce any Hiſtory affords a Parallel.

THIS *Town* filled very faſt with People, and waxed rich, and made an eminent Figure among the Tribes of our Iſrael. A waſte howling Wilderneſs became a pleaſant Habitation, like the Garden of God, ſatisfy'd with Favour, and full with the Bleſſing of the Lord.

ALSO the *Church* here had added to it daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved; Multitudes, both Men and Women. As it is ſaid, Act. 6. 7. *The Word of God increaſed, and the Number of the Diſciples multiplied in* Jeruſalem *greatly.* And as it is ſaid of the Church at *Rome* in its firſt days, Rom. 1. 8. *Their Faith was ſpoken of throughout the whole World.* In this Reſpect our Land might once be called the Glory of all Lands; this Town, the golden City, and this Church a fruitful Field, which the Lord hath bleſſed. Glorious Things have been ſpoken of thee, O City of GOD, Beautiful for Situation, the Joy of the whole Earth, and Heaven's Delight, as *Jeruſalem* of old.

AND now if the REASONS of their Proſperity and Growth be inquir'd into, it may be ſaid,

1. WE muſt reſolve all into the gracious *Preſence* of CHRIST with them, as the *principal* Cauſe, the fundamental Ground.

THE Preſence of Chriſt with our Forefathers was the Fountain of all their *temporal* Proſperity, Safety and Increaſe. It is remarkable, that ſeveral repeated Attempts for the Settlement of an Engliſh Plantation in the Bay of *Maſſachuſets*, upon *worldly* Views, prov'd abortive; tho' undertaken by Gentlemen of conſiderable Powers & Eſtates; attended with

with a multitude of Servants: "The Difficulties of "a Wilderneſs were too hard for them; they met "with ſuch croſs Providences, as did quickly diſ-"courage; and at laſt diſſipate them ‡. But it pleaſed God to put a viſible Diſtinction upon the Undertakers of this religious Settlement, and crown their nobler Enterprize with glorious Succeſs. This he did for his *own Name*'s ſake. They had been eminent Confeſſors, and ſuffer'd not a little in the Cauſe of Chriſt; ventur'd their Lives and Eſtates over the dangerous Seas, and expos'd their Perſons in the Thickets of a hideous Indian Deſert, that they might purſue the Deſigns of Chriſtianity in rightly conſtituted Churches; ſerve God in the Goſpel of his Son, with Liberty of Conſcience, according to their beſt Light, and ſet up the Kingdom of Chriſt, where Satan's Seat was. The Honour of Chriſt therefore was concern'd in the Succeſs of their Undertaking, and engag'd his favourable Preſence to diſtinguiſh them. As it was ſaid in the Caſe of *Iſrael*, Ezek. 23. 14. *But I wrought for my name's ſake, that it ſhould not be polluted before the heathen, in whoſe ſight I brought them out.*

It was a precious Word, our pious Anceſtors by Faith liv'd upon, ‖ 2 Sam. 7. 10. *I will appoint a place for my people Iſrael, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more: neither ſhall the children of wickedneſs afflict them any more, as beforetime.* It was the God of *Iſrael*, who conducted his People over the wide and hazardous Ocean, and prepared a Sanctuary for them in a ſtrange Land, here in this obſcure Corner of the World. We have heard with our Ears; our Fathers have told us, how God did drive out the Heathen,

‡ Dr. *I. Mather*'s Relation of Indian Troubles

‖ See a Sermon of the famous old Mr. *Cotton*'s upon this Text, intitled, *God's Promiſe to his Plantations.* —— Printed in *England*, Anno 1634.

then, and *plant* his People. They got not the Land in poſſeſſion by their own Sword, nor did their own Arm ſave them: but his right Hand, His holy Arm, and the Light of his Countenance, becauſe He had a Favour unto them. God drove out the wild Tribes of *Indian* Natives, by mortal *Sickneſſes* † and waſting Warrs one with another; that He might make Room for his *Iſrael*, and prepare a City for Habitation. Here he made the hungry to dwell; he bleſſed them alſo, that they multiply'd greatly, and made them Families like a Flock. They found here a ſure Refuge and a Reſting place: and had a Table prepared before them in the preſence of their Enemies. They experienc'd the Fulfilling of that Word, Job 8. 6, 7. *If thou wouldſt ſeek unto God betimes, and make thy ſupplication to the Almighty; If thou wert pure and upright; ſurely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteouſneſs proſperous.* The *Errand* of our Forefathers into a waſte Wilderneſs was not to ſeek this World's Good, but to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs: Nevertheleſs they by the Bounty of Providence receiv'd an Increaſe of earthly Comforts, as additional Bleſſings.

God had Compaſſion on them for his Covenant's ſake, and permitted not the Sword of the Wilderneſs to devour, or Cold and Hunger to deſtroy them, or fatal Sickneſs to make the Land deſolate. Tho' ſometimes thick and dark Clouds, charg'd with Thunder, and ſhooting out their firy Arrows, rolled over them; yet God prevented Deſtruction coming upon them, and ſoon diſſipated the threatning

† The *Plague* amongſt them in *Plymouth*-Colony, and the *Small Pox* among the *Maſſachuſets*, which ſwept away whole Plantations of them together, not one Soul eſcaping the common Deſtruction. Dr. I. *Mather's Relation of Indian Troubles.*

ning Appearance ‖: In all their Affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his Preſence ſaved them: in his Love and in his Pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carry'd them all the days of old. The Righteous ſaw it and rejoyced: and all Iniquity ſtopped her Mouth, or every Curſe was turn'd into a Bleſſing: the Wrath of Man praiſed him; and the Remainder thereof he did reſtrain.

THE Beauty of the Lord our GOD was upon his People, and he eſtabliſhed the Work of their Hands. He inſtructed the Husbandman to Diſcretion, and ſatisfy'd the Earth with the fruit of his Works: Cauſing the Graſs to grow for the Cattel, and Herb for the Service of Man, furniſhing Seed to the Sower and Bread to the Eater.

HE bleſſed them alſo in the City, as well as Field. *Boſton*, tho' originally a Plantation for Religion, not Trade, yet hath been a proſperous Town. GOD has been pleas'd to ſmile on our Merchandize and Navigation, Trade and Buſineſs, in years paſt; ſo that *Zabulon* rejoyced in his goings forth, as well as *Iſſachar* in his Tents.

WHOSO

‖ 'Twas a wonderful Providence of GOD particularly that *reſtrain'd* the Fury of the *Heathen* in our firſt Times. "It is to be wonder'd at, (ſays one of our Hiſtorians) that the Church in *Plimouth* ſhou'd be preſerv'd, when other Engliſh Plantations cou'd not ſubſiſt in this Country, but either the Indians or the Lord's own Hand brought them to a ſudden End from time to time. But GOD, who ſaw that they deſigned ſomething better than the World, in their planting here, watched over them. —— "Some of the ancient Planters have told us, that the Indians being poſſeſſed with fears leſt the Engliſh ſhou'd in time take their Country from them, did early conſpire to deſtroy them: And the ſmall handful of Chriſtians then in *Salem* (lately arriv'd) were alarm'd with the Report of no leſs than a thouſand barbarous Natives, coming to cut them off, and that upon a Lord's-Day; whereupon they diſcharged ſeveral great Guns, loaden with ſmall Shot, which made ſuch a terrible Rattling among the Trees afar off, that the amazed Indians return'd, without putting their bloody Deſign in Execution. —— Dr. *I. Mather*, ubi ſupra.

WHOSO is wiſe and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the *Lovingkindneſs of the Lord* in a very remarkable Inſtance. The Preſence of GOD with our Fathers was their Strength and Defence, and the Source of all their Victories, Succeſſes, and external Tranquillity and Happineſs.

WE may ſing very properly on this Occaſion in the Language of Pſal. 107. *O give Thanks unto the Lord: for he is good. Let the Redeemed of the Lord ſay ſo, whom he hath redeemed, and gather'd out of the Lands, from the Eaſt and Weſt, from the North and South. They wandred in the wilderneſs in a ſolitary way, they found no city to dwell in. Hungry & thirſty, their ſoul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their diſtreſſes. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* And ſo in the Language of Pſal. 105. — *Glory in his holy Name, O ye Seed of* Abraham *his Servant, ye Children of* Jacob *his Choſen. When they were but a few men in number, yea a very few & Strangers; when they went from one Nation to another, from one Kingdom to another People, He ſuffer'd no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved Kings for their ſakes. He increaſed his People greatly, and made them ſtronger than their Enemies. He ſent* Moſes *his Servant, and* Aaron *whom he had choſen,* to lead them forth by a right way: *and gave them the Lands of the Heathen, that they might obſerve his Statutes and keep his Laws,* pure and intire, without the Depravation of human Mixtures, *Praiſe ye the Lord.* *

But

* I am bold to expreſs my ſelf on this Occaſion very much in Language borrow'd from the *Sacred Story* of the ancient *Iſraelites*: for I freely confeſs my Opinion, "if there has been any People in the World, whoſe general Hiſtory runs Parallel with *that*, 'tis the People of *New-England*.

But to proceed, ——

Again, The *Preſence* of Chriſt with our Fathers in this Land was the Fountain of all their *ſpiritual* and *moral* Happineſs and Excellence. It was a plentiful Effuſion of the HOLY SPIRIT, that turn'd this Wilderneſs into a fruitful Field, and gave it a Glory above that of *Lebanon*, and above the Excellency of *Carmel* and *Sharon*. He appointed it for a Fold of Flocks; and here as the Lord their Shepherd, he cauſed them to lie down in green Paſtures, reſtored their Souls, and led them in the Paths of Righteouſneſs for his Name's ſake. 'Twas the Preſence of the Spirit of Chriſt with them, in their Families, Courts, Schools, and Churches, that ſo glorioufly ſucceeded the Means for increaſing of Knowledge, and promoting of Order, Peace, Juſtice, Sobriety, and Religion. Then that word was fulfilled, Pſal. 72. 6, 7. *He ſhall come down like Rain upon the mowen Graſs, as Showres that water the Ground — There ſhall be a handful of Corn in the Earth upon the top of the Mountains, the fruit thereof ſhall ſhake like* Lebanon, *and they of the City ſhall flouriſh like Graſs of the Field.* The influxive Preſence of Chriſt gave an admirable Energy to the Seed of the Goſpel here ſown; that an handful of it produc'd a mighty Harveſt to the Glory of Chriſt. 'Twas the *Fruit of the Spirit*; intirely owing to his concurrent Influences: without whoſe powerful Bleſſing all human Inſtruments and ſecond Cauſes have no Significance.

But tho' all their Proſperity is to be reſolv'd ultimately into the Power of the Lord preſent with them: Yet it may be obſerv'd,

2. There were *ſubordinate* Cauſes, *ſecondary* Grounds and Reaſons, which in their place & order challenge ſome Regard with us.

It might be premis'd here, The Flouriſhing of Religion among our Fathers had a powerful Efficacy,

cacy, as the beſt *natural* Means, to promote their univerſal Proſperity, Peace, and external Glory. For as the Wiſe Man obſerves, Prov. 14. *The Fear of the Lord is a Fountain of Life*: — *Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation.* —— And let me ſpeak freely, without offence to any. The firſt Beginners of this Plantation, as to the Body of them, were an excellent Set of real and living Chriſtians, who felt the power of vital Religion in their Hearts; and not ſuch as deſir'd only to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh.

Doubtless indeed they had a Mixture of *falſe* Profeſſors among them: but theſe being aw'd by the prevailing Example of ſerious Godlineſs and the common Zeal againſt Sin, were generally careful to preſerve an Appearance of Religion in their Lives; ſo that in the firſt days of *Boſton* and *New-England*, all Iniquity was forc'd to hide its head: it fled the open Light, it ſought for Shelter in Darkneſs, and lurk'd privily in ſecret places: while Virtue was triumphant, and Religion reign'd every where, in the Converſation, Language and Actions of the Generality. —— It muſt further be obſerv'd, as to the worthieſt of our Fathers, they were *but Men*; in a State of Imperfection; and therefore ſubject to Temptations and ſinful Infirmities: And *ſome* in our beſt times might be of too rigid and ſevere a Temper, have leſs Candour and more Heat with relation to certain Modalities and minute points of Church-Order, than became them; and as one might be of too levelling Principles, ſo another of too cloſe and narrow a Spirit, and not liberally enough diſpos'd towards the Servants of the Publick. *Some* I ſay, among the firſt and beſt Generation of this People, I readily concede, might be deficient and reprovable on ſuch heads as theſe: Yet even *they* were in general Men of an excellent Spirit, and in other regards appear'd with ſhining Characters of the Divine Image upon them. But many others

there were, who poſſeſſed their Graces and Virtues, without thoſe their Diſtemper'd Frames.

THERE were among them many Plants of Renown, Trees of Righteouſneſs, ſome of the choiceſt in the whole Garden of Chriſt: and their Tranſplantation from *Britain* to *New-England* did but add to their Beauty, Verdure and Refinement. They flouriſh'd in this Soil, and multiply'd and brought forth abundantly the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt to the Praiſe of GOD. Here the glorious *Jeſus* (and GOD in him) had the ſincereſt Honours, the pureſt Love and moſt faithful Obedience paid to him: —— which engag'd his *Covenant-Preſence*, and drew down his Bleſſing on this People.

AND then the excellent Virtues, which in a flouriſhing State of Religion, were continually and almoſt univerſally in Practice, contributed by a neceſſary and powerful Influence (*in their own Nature*) to the good Regulation of all kinds of Societies, to the Happineſs of Converſation, to the Security and Succeſs of Commerce, and an univerſally proſperous State of Externals. By their Induſtry, Sobriety, Temperance, Mortification and Self-denial, Juſtice, Integrity, and the like, they took a moſt effectual Method to ſecure the Happineſs of the ſocial Life, and prevented abundance of ſuch Miſchiefs and Diſorders, as are the natural Reſults of thoſe Vices, which have been the Ruine of many a People.

BUT it will be inquir'd,

WHAT *were the peculiar inſtrumental* Cauſes, *and more immediate* Reaſons *and* Occaſions *of ſuch an extraordinary Flouriſhing of Religion in that day?* What the *Means* under GOD, the *ſpecial* Means?

As to the Goſpel, the great Inſtrument of Religion, that's in it ſelf the ſame at all times, and the Power and Grace of Chriſt in themſelves the ſame.

We have juſt Ground then to think there was ſomething in the Men and the Circumſtances of that Age or Generation, which might have ſome Inſtrumentality, and conduce as a Means, to the uncommon Succeſs of the Goſpel, and Flouriſhing of Chriſtianity among them.

I will give you my Thoughts under a few diſtinct heads. Let it be conſider'd,

1. The *initial Generation of* New-England *was very much a* Select *&* Puritanical *People, in the proper ſenſe of the Word.* They were not (as to the Body of them) a promiſcuous and heterogeneous Aſſemblage: but in general of an uniform Character, agreeing in the moſt excellent Qualities, Principles and Tempers; Chriſtians very much of the primitive Stamp. As one of our Worthies of the ſecond Generation † has aptly expreſſed it, "God *ſifted* a whole Nation that he might ſend a *choice Grain* over into this Wilderneſs": --- Seeking a godly Seed to ſerve him, which ſhould be counted before him for a Generation, even a Generation of his Praiſe.

It was as little of a mixed Generation, in regard of their moral Character and religious Profeſſion, that came over firſt to *New-England*, as perhaps was ever known in the Earth. We read, when *Iſrael* went up out of *Egypt* in ſuch Pomp & Glory, there went a *mixt Multitude* with them, who were a Snare and Diſgrace to the *Iſraelites*, and by a profane and vicious Example ſpred Infection among them. But now the firſt Generation of this People were very much a *choſen* Generation: collected from a Variety of Places, and by a ſtrange Conduct of Divine Providence agreeing in the ſame Enterprize, to form a Plantation for Religion in this diſtant Part of the World, where they might worſhip God according to

† Mr. *Stoughton* in his Election-Sermon.

to the Light of their own Conſciences, without the depraving Intermixture of human Inventions, and without Hazard of Perſecution from the Bigots for papiſtical Ceremonies.

THE Genius or Spirit of the Age was ſuch as indiſpoſed the Generality to this ſort of Men, I mean the *Puritans*, who were deſpiſed as hypocritical or ignorant Preciſians; like the primitive Chriſtians, *a Sect every where ſpoken againſt*, and *ſuffering like things of their own Countrymen, even as they did of the* Jews. And then the Remoteneſs of theſe American Shores, the Dangers of the Voyage, the Difficulties of a Settlement in an hideous Waſte, and the former Defeat of ſeveral Eſſays for a Plantation here; theſe were Conſiderations that tended to ſtrike Terror upon the *Worldly minded*: inſomuch that few Men of that Complexion had Spirit enough to joyn in ſo arduous and expenceful an Adventure. Few had the Heart and the Courage to leave their native Land, and pleaſant Habitations, Friends and Relatives, and exchange them for the Society of Strangers, and for Hardſhips, Straights & Diſtreſſes in a foreign rude and wild Country; but thoſe who felt the power of that *Faith*, which worketh by Love, which over cometh the World, and is the Evidence of Things not ſeen, the Subſtance of Things hoped for.

"THERE being a Royal Patent for the *Maſſachu-*
"*ſets* Government, many out of *England* flocked
"into this Country almoſt every year, chiefly on
"the Account of *Religion* *. But ſcarce any of a profane Character mingled themſelves with the firſt Comers; and of thoſe that came hither upon ſecular Views, ſome were diſhearten'd by the Toils and Difficulties they met with, and ſoon return'd, and others finding this reform'd Climate diſagreable

* Dr. *I. Mather* ibid.

to their vitiated Inclinations, took their ſpeedy Flight away. ‖

Now being ſuch a ſelect and unmix'd Generation, this was one Reaſon of the extraordinary Flouriſhing and bright Appearance of Religion in that day. It was in the general a ſhining Collection of ſincere Profeſſors; who enliven'd and animated one another, in following after Holineſs, by the reciprocal Influences of an alluring Example.

Let it further be obſerv'd,

2. They *were, for the Generality, ſuch as had been trained up in the School of* Patience.

The Body of the firſt Comers were Men in their middle age or declining days; who had been inured to Sufferings for Righteouſneſs-ſake: being among thoſe Puritan Reformers, who had for many years been witneſſing againſt the Relicts of Popiſh Superſtitions in Proteſtant Worſhip, and had been perſecuted for their Zeal in the Cauſe of a further Reformation. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my Youth, might* Iſrael *ſay.*

Now their Afflictions being ſanctify'd to 'em, they ſerv'd to their Eſtabliſhment and Growth in Grace: which made them the more meet and prepar'd to conflict with the Difficulties of this new Settlement, to encounter Oppoſitions, and triumph over Diſcouragements. They learnt Obedience by the things which they had ſuffer'd; were purify'd in the Furnace of Affliction, and came forth as Gold out of the Fire refin'd. They were not like him in the Parable of the *Sower*, that receiv'd Seed into ſtony

‖ "Some that came hither upon ſudden undigeſted Grounds, did ſoon return upon as ſlight Reaſons, carry'd by an unſtayed Spirit. Others that muſt have Elbow-room and cou'd not abide to be ſo pinion'd with the ſtrict Government in the Common-wealth and Diſcipline in the Church, alſo removed hence. *Vid.* New England's *Firſt Fruits.*

ſtony places; who heareth the Word and entertains it with Joy, yet *hath he not Root* in himſelf, and therefore continues *but a while*; for when *Tribulation* or *Perſecution* ariſeth becauſe of the Word, by and by he is *offended*, diſcouraged and falls away. No, but they were like him, that received Seed into *good* Ground, which brought forth Fruit *to Perfection*. They were ſomething in the Apoſtle's Caſe, who had long been ſerving the Lord, with many Tears, and Temptations, which befel him by the laying in wait of the *Jews*, and the Trial of their Faith (like his) wrought Patience: ſo that altho' Afflictions awaited them continually, yet none of theſe things moved them, neither counted they their Life dear unto them, if ſo be they might finiſh their Courſe with Joy, and the Work which God had committed to them. They ſtagger'd not at the Promiſe thro' Unbelief, but in ſome ſort like *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, were ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God. Tho' in ſome days of Temptation, they might ſeem almoſt *ſhaken in Mind*, and ready to give up their Undertaking as deſperate: yet they were enabled to overcome at the laſt, and their *Faith failed not*. They confeſſed they were Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth; had a Spirit in ſome ſingular meaſure wean'd from this vain World by the Afflictions and Trials they had met with; and looked for a City to come, that hath Foundations, whoſe Maker and Builder is God. Hence laying aſide every Weight, they cou'd run with Patience the Race ſet before them.

Having *receiv'd the Word in much Affliction* all their days from their Youth up, it was the leſs a Diſcouragement to them now, that they muſt *thro' much Tribulation* (tho' of another nature) *enter into the Kingdom of God*. Nay, the proſpect of Difficulties might ſeveral ways be of Service to the Work in hand; particularly by keeping them humble, by putting

putting an Edge on their Zeal, by exciting them to Diligence and Diſpatch, by diſpoſing them to ſtudy Union, and (like the Builders of *Jeruſalem*) to ſtrengthen one anothersHands for this goodWork.

3. They *had* newly *experienc'd the Goodneſs of God in eminent Works done for their* Salvation: *which had its* ſanctifying *Effects upon them.*

The Goodneſs of God ſerv'd to lead them to Repentance, and engage them to Obedience. The Impreſſion of their Deliverances, and of the Enlargements given them by a gracious Providence, was now freſh upon their Minds, and had doubtleſs a holy Influence into their Lives. So it was with the firſt Generation of the *Iſraelites* that ſettled in *Canaan*, Judg. 2. 7. *And the people ſerved the Lord all the days of Joſhua, and all the days of the Elders that outlived Joſhua, who had ſeen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Iſrael.* "They that ſaw thoſe Wonders, which God wrought for his People, had ſo much Senſe as to believe their own Eyes, and ſo much Reaſon as to ſerve that God, who had appear'd ſo glorioufly on their behalf." The ſucceeding Generation indeed forgot the Works of the Lord, the great things he did for their Fathers in bringing them out of Egypt, and planting them in a good Land; and ſo had very little Value for the Religion of their Fathers, but corrupted their ways, and forſook the Lord. Whereas the firſt Generation, who had the great Actions of Providence done for them freſh in Remembrance, theſe were by a Principle of ingenuous Gratitude excited to a zealous ſerving the holy One of Iſrael. So in the firſt times of *New-England*,

Their religious Liberties and Privileges being *new* to them, increaſed their Value with them, inflam'd their Zeal, and made them more diligent in employing aright the happy Opportunities and Seaſons of Grace they enjoy'd; and which were eſteem'd by them a plentiful Reward of all the Hazards they

had expos'd themſelves to, and Difficulties they were ſtruggling with.

4. The Buſineſs *and* Occaſion *of that Day were extraordinary, and ſuch as might conduce to the Flouriſhing of Religion among the firſt Generation of this People.*

One obſerves †, "When God doth in a more than ordinary way of Providence, *form a People* to himſelf, there is ever that which is *eminent* in the *primitive frame* of things amongſt them. Thus God ſpeaks of his Vineyard, Iſa. 5. 2. *It was planted with the choiceſt Vine.* Thus alſo God ſpeaks of Judges as *at the firſt*, and Counſellors as *at the beginning*, Iſa. 1. 26.— *David* had his *firſt ways*, 2 Chron. 17. 3. And ſo Churches have their firſt ways, when they newly come out of the *forming Hand* of God". *Epheſus* had her *firſt Love* and her *firſt Works.* And thus it has been with *New-England.* Surely God hath often ſpoke concerning his Churches here, as in Jer. 2. 2, 3. *I remember the Kindneſs of thy Youth, the Love of thine Eſpouſals, when thou wenteſt after me in the Wilderneſs, in a Land that was not ſown.* Iſrael *was Holineſs unto the Lord.* O how much of Holineſs to the Lord was written upon all their Affairs and Tranſactions!

Now there was ſomething in the Nature of Things and in the peculiar Circumſtances of that Day, which might contribute not a little to the proſperous ſtate of Religion among the firſt Generation of *New-England.*

Religion was the one grand Deſign upon which they came hither; the ſecuring of it among themſelves, propagating it to their Poſterity, and planting it among the Heathen: and this Deſign took up the Chief of their Thoughts, Cares and Prayers.

The

† *Stoughton* ubi ſupra.

THE Succeſs of their Undertaking depended very much on the exemplary Piety, Reputation and good Conduct of the firſt Engagers.

THEY were (as they hoped) laying the *Foundation of many Generations*; the Foundation for a glorious Superſtructure; and in this Work they were to be made *a Spectacle* to the World, Angels, and Men. Therefore as they needed GOD to be with them now in a peculiar manner, they were very careful not to forfeit the Divine Preſence by any provoking Evils: but did all they cou'd to ſecure that Bleſſing of Heaven, which was neceſſary to give Proſperity to the Work in Hand. "It was needful that the *firſt Advances* of ſuch a Work ſhould be great and conſiderable, and that ſome very notable Progreſs ſhould be made in the *Beginning*, as the Church and Intereſt of Chriſt here lay now more expos'd, and liable to be inſulted and cruſh'd in its infant-ſtate". ——Upon this account, as they needed, they therefore ſollicitouſly ſought, to have the Hand of GOD more remarkably with them at that critical Juncture.

THEY made it their Care to avoid every thing, that might open the Mouths of envious Enemies, to ſpeak Evil of the way of Truth on their account, and it was their Concern that their Light might ſo ſhine before others, as that they might glorify GOD in them, and acknowledge the Work they were engag'd in was *of the Lord*. In a word, the Threatnings of *Zion*'s Adverſaries, did but quicken them in their Work, ſo that they took the greater Pains and made the more Haſte in building the Walls of *Jeruſalem*.

THUS, in ſuch Regards as theſe, the extraordinary Nature and Seaſon and peculiar Circumſtances of their pious Undertaking, had a natural Influence to the eminent Proſperity it met with.

AGAIN,

AGAIN, let it be conſider'd,

5. THEY *were Men of an* extraordinary Character, *for the beſt Accompliſhments, that were the* Leaders *of the firſt Generation in this great Work.*

A faithful Magiſtracy and Miniſtry are two diſtinguiſhing Articles of the publick Happineſs, and contribute as much as any at all to the Proſperity of Virtue and Religion in a place. This was one of the brighteſt Glories of our primitive Times. *God led his People like a Flock by the hand of* Moſes *and* Aaron.

THEIR *civil* Leaders were in general Men of the beſt Character, for governing Abilities and Virtues. The *Righteous* were in Authority: which made the People rejoyce, and gave Reputation to Religion. There was much of the Kingdom of Chriſt in the civil Conſtitution and Laws of the Country, and in the Spirit and Conduct of our primitive Rulers. They were, like *David*, Men according to GOD's own heart; feeding *Jacob* his People with Integrity and Skill. They were as the Heads of *Iſſachar*, underſtanding of the Times to know what *Iſrael* ought to do. They had the Temper of *Moſes*, who choſe rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of GOD, than to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin, which are but for a Seaſon, and eſteem'd the Reproach of *Chriſt* greater Riches than the Treaſures of *Egypt*. They conſider'd themſelves as Rulers under and for CHRIST; as Miniſters of GOD, appointed for a Terror to evil Doers, and for a Praiſe to them that do well. Accordingly they were warm and active Enemies to Vice, Blaſphemy, and Profaneneſs: but diligent Promoters of univerſal Morality, and zealous Patrons of pure Religion. They were bright Examples of all Godlineſs & Honeſty; Patterns of Juſtice, Benignity, Gravity, Temperance and Self-denial: and apply'd their Authority for the promoting Piety & Virtue in others. The Intereſt

of

of Religion lay much on their Hearts, and enter'd more or leſs into all their publick Actions, Cares, and Deſigns. Far were they from the Spirit of the Nobles of *Tekoa*, who (when *Jeruſalem* was in repairing) *put not their Necks to the Work of the Lord.* But as thoſe that *prefer'd Jeruſalem above their chief Joy*, they employ'd a Variety of the wiſeſt Methods for the Advancement of the Kingdom of Chriſt, and for the Security and Proſperity of his Churches in this Wilderneſs. Like godly *Hezekiah* they ſpake comfortable words to ſuch as taught the good Knowledge of the Lord, animating and encouraging them in the Service of God. And as *Joaſh* did not diſdain to take Counſel of *Jehojada* the Prieſt, nor *Joſiah* of *Hulda* the Propheteſs; So neither did the ancient Leaders in our civil Government diſdain to conſult with the eccleſiaſtical Leaders in matters of Weight and general Concernment to the Churches and Common-wealth; but you might often ſee *Moſes* and *Aaron* meet and kiſs one another in the Mount of God. They were tender of the Credit and Honour of the ſacred Miniſtry; taught the People by their own Example to reverence faithful Meſſengers of the Lord, and were ready to ſcreen ſuch from the Injuries of the Malevolent. They were Members of the Churches themſelves, and by ſetting a beautiful Pattern of Order, Peaceableneſs, and Submiſſion to the Elders, to their Power and Rule in the Lord, they much contributed to a regular and quiet State of things therein. They were ardent Lovers of the Word and Ordinances of Chriſt, and Aſſembly of the Saints; and gave their conſtant Attendence both in Seaſon and out of Seaſon. Like *Nehemiah* they contended for the Honour of the holy Sabbath, and did many good Deeds for the Houſe of their God and the Offices thereof. They were as Eyes to his People in the Wilderneſs. They were as nurſing Fathers:

Fathers: they delivered the Poor that cried, and the Fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon them: and they caused the Widows heart to sing. They put on Righteousness, and it clothed them: their Judgment was as a Robe and a Diadem. In a word, They sought the Welfair of their People: were very tender of the young Plant committed to their Care, nurs'd and cherish'd it with their benign Influences.

And then the *ecclesiastical* Leaders, they were also in general Men of the like approv'd Character; eminent in all ministerial Gifts and Graces, which form'd them visibly for great & extraordinary Services. There were reforming Rulers: *And there were with them the Prophets of God helping them.* The Ministers of that day very much breathed the Spirit of the old Prophets and of the Apostles; in all things studying to approve themselves as the Ministers of God, in much Patience, in Afflictions, in Necessities, in Distresses, in Labours, in Watchings, in Fastings, by Pureness, by Knowledge, by Longsuffering, by Kindness, by Love unfeigned, by the Word of Truth, by the Power of God, by the Armour of Righteousness on the right hand, and on the left; in Honour and Dishonour; as Deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well-known; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoycing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things. They were conspicuous Examples of Mortification to the World, and of fervent Devotion; Men of God; Watchmen upon the Wall; giving themselves continually to the Ministry of the Word and Prayer: preparing their Hearts to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in *Israel* Statutes and Judgments. They were burning & shining Light, some of the purest and brightest; and diffus'd an uncommon Lustre,

both

both by their holy Adminiſtrations, and by their exemplary Deportments. Their Hearts and Lips were toucht by a lively Coal from the Altar: and their Faces ſhone, as *Moſes* juſt come down from the Mount, where he had been admitted to glorious Intimacies with Heaven. In a word, they were Men ſingularly well accompliſh'd, and full of a flaming Zeal for the Intereſt and Honour of Chriſt and for the Salvation of Souls.——And now theſe things, as Means, operated not a little to the Succeſs of the Miniſtry, and ſo to the Flouriſhing of Religion. We read concerning *Barnabas*, Acts 11. 24. *For he was a good man, and full of the holy Ghoſt, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.* "His excellent Character was that which "contributed to his Succeſs. It's granted, that "Succeſs is neither of *Paul* that planteth, nor of "*Apollos* that watereth, but all of and from GOD, "who giveth the Increaſe. However we muſt al-"low, that GOD owns Men of extraordinary Grace "and Faith and Holineſs above other Men, and "uſually does greater Things by *Such* than by o-"thers. And then their lovely Character gives a ſingular Repute to their Profeſſion, and their bright Example by a natural Efficacy adds peculiar Weight and Force to their Preaching. This acquires a mighty Intereſt in the Hearts of all that know and ſee them; and in Conſequence thereof gives them a powerful Influence. It was one happy Circumſtance of our firſt Days, that the Churches of Chriſt here were illuminated with a godly and learned Miniſtry: and their Eminency in ſacred Knowledge, and in Grace and Goodneſs, did ſubſerve very much to the bleſſed Ends of the Paſtoral Care, and abundantly conduce to the Proſperity of the Kingdom of Chriſt in this Place.

FURTHER

§ For the Confirmation of theſe Characters and my other Re-

FURTHER it may be obſerv'd,

6. THEY united *in uſing the beſt* Methods, *with the greateſt Diligence and wiſeſt Application, for the promoting of Religion* : And this was one happy Occaſion of the diſtinguiſhing Succeſs of it in that day.

IN chief, the Plantation was carry'd on, and Religion upheld & promoted, by the power of Prayer : yet at the ſame time, they were found in the uſe of the moſt excellent Means. Magiſtrates in their Places, Miniſters in their Station, Heads of Families in their Capacity, Courts of Juſtice in their Manner, Churches and Schools in their reſpective Ways, all conſpired with a holy Zeal and Vigour to eſtabliſh and advance the Kingdom of Chriſt, by an indefatigable Application of proper Methods. And theſe under the Direction and Bleſſing of Heaven were ſucceſsful Means to that glorious End. What Proſperity might not, by a common Bleſſing, be expected from ſuch an Union of human Powers, and rare exerting of their beſt Endeavours ! This is a Circumſtance, that deſerves an Aſteriſm to be ſet upon it, when we are ſpeaking of thoſe Things, which might be of ſpecial Advantage to the Succeſs of the Goſpel in the firſt days of *New-England* and of *Boſton* in particular.

" THEN, ſays One † might be ſeen Magiſtrates " and Magiſtrates upon the Seat of Juſtice cemented " together for the Advancement of the Kingdom of " Chriſt in this Wilderneſs. —— Then might be " ſeen Magiſtrates and Miniſters together in way of " Advice : —— Miniſters and Miniſters cleaving " together in way of Communion : —— Miniſters " and

marks, I refer the Reader to the HISTORIES of *New-England*, and in particular to that of the late Rev. Dr. *Cotton Mather*, which contains the *Lives* of a great Number of our Patriots in the *Magiſtracy* and Worthies in the *Miniſtry* of the firſt Generation.

† Mr. *Shepard* of *Charlſtown* in his Election-Sermon.

" and their reſpective Congregations together in " way of Prayer and holy Worſhip : — Churches " and Churches together in way of Conſultation by " greater and leſſer Synods : — Magiſtrates, Mini- " ſters, and their People together, — uniting Hands and Hearts in the common Cauſe, and breathing a publick Spirit ; looking not at their own Things, but the Things of *Jeſus Chriſt*. Then might be ſeen Elders, both ruling well and labouring in the Word and Doctrine, watching for Souls, as they that muſt give an Account ; alſo Deacons uſing their Office well, and purchaſing to themſelves a good Degree. Then might be ſeen Brethren walking together in Love, and maintaining brotherly Watch and Fellowſhip. Then might be ſeen Chriſtians meeting frequently in Private for Acts of ſocial Religion, and ſerious Conference. Then might be ſeen the Generality of Heads of Families walking in their houſes with a perfect heart, endeavouring to make them fruitful Seminaries of Religion ; bringing up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, and having their Servants in Subjection with all Gravity. Then might be ſeen the Multitude of God's People flocking to the Publick Worſhip with a laudable Zeal and Devotion. How careful to keep the Lord's day holy ! " How diligent in preparing " their Hearts ! How attentive in hearing the " everlaſting Goſpel, and carrying home divine " Leſſons to feed their Families with by Conference " and Repetition ! How fervent in Prayer to God " for a divine Bleſſing on the Seed ſown ! What " earneſt Deſires in thoſe days after Communion " with Chriſt in the holy Sacraments ! What Sol- " licitude to ſeek the Lord after the right Order, as " well as in right Ordinances ! What pious Care " of the Churches fill'd the hearts of the Faithful ! " What Readineſs to call for and accept the Help " of Councils in any Caſes of Difference or Diffi-

" culty ! And what Reverence of the Sentence of " a Council ! In a word, what frequent Renew- " ings of the ſolemn Covenant ! And what a holy " Care of the Children of the Church, to propa- " gate pure Religion to the riſing Generation ! *

WELL might the Conſequence of all this be the flouriſhing of the Kingdom of Chriſt. TheChurches had Reſt, and were edify'd : and walking together in the Faith and Order of the Goſpel, and in the Comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, were multiply'd.

THIS brings me to the remaining Head, under which I propos'd,

III. To *ſay ſomething upon the extraordinary* Degree *of Improvement, which this Plant of the Lord has been remarkable for.*

BUT here I have in a great meaſure prevented my ſelf by what has been already ſaid. Shall therefore make no Enlargement on this head.

OUR Text compares the Increaſe of the Goſpel-Church to the Growth of a *Muſtard-Plant* ; which, tho' in its firſt Principle it be very ſmall, yet when grown to Maturity and Perfection is *the greateſt among Herbs, and becometh a Tree, ſo that the Birds of the Air come and lodge in the Branches thereof.* ‡

THIS Deſcription may denote the Beauty, the Stability, and the Uſefulneſs of the Muſtard-Plant: Which would naturally lead me (in further purſuance of my preſent Deſign) to treat of the State of Chriſt's Kingdom in this place, when grown to its Maturity, under each of thoſe Heads diſtinctly.

IT

* Mr. DANFORTH of *Roxbury* in his Election-Sermon.

‡ Note, The Muſtard-Plant in *Judea* was much greater in its growth, than in theſe parts of the World. Some tell us of their having known it to riſe to a great Height and to large Dimenſions ; ſo that the Fowls of the Air and Beaſts of the Field lodg'd under the ſhadow of it. —— *Pol. Synops.*

It was beautiful, as a ſtately and ſpreading Tree, ſhooting out its comely Branches. *How goodly thy Tents, O* Jacob *! Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty : for it was perfect through my comelineſs which I had put upon thee, ſaith the Lord God.*

It was ſtedfaſt, rooted and eſtabliſh'd ; ſurviving many ſhocking Storms, and threatning Changes. *As the days of a Tree are the days of my People,* ſaith the Lord, *and mine Elect ſhall long enjoy the work of their Hands.*

It was a Tree of Righteouſneſs, very fruitful, to the Glory of God, and yielded Seed for After-Generations. In them was fulfilled that Word ; *The Lord called thy Name, A green Olive-Tree, fair, and of goodly Fruit.*

In a word, it was a Refuge for many, who from other parts of the World have repair'd hither, and under a ſhadowing ſhroud found Shelter & Refreſhment : Worldly Men obtruding themſelves for worldly Ends, and holy Men for holy Ends, have made their Neſts in the Boughs of this once flouriſhing Tree. †

But I muſt not enter into any Diſcourſe on theſe Things.

The

† "For the fruits of *Congregational Diſcipline*, as it hath been exerciſed in our Churches in *New-England* (tho' in much Weakneſs) the Lord hath not left us without Teſtimony from Heaven. Particularly,

"Firſt, in making theſe Churches a little Sanctuary, through his Grace, to many Thouſands of his Servants, who fled over hither to avoid the unſupportable Preſſures of their Conſciences by the Epiſcopal Tyranny.

"Secondly, in bleſſing the Miniſtry of our Preachers here with like fruits of Converſion, as in our native Country, of ſundry elder and younger Perſons ; who came over hither not out of Reſpect to Conſcience or ſpiritual Ends, but out of reſpect to Friends, or outward Enlargements : but have here found that Grace, which they ſought not for, &c. Cotton's *Way of Congregational Churches cleared.*

THE APPLICATION remains: and here ſhall only offer a few Hints by way of Exhortation.

Uſe I. LET *us frequently look back to our* Original, *and conſider the* Beginning *and* Progreſs *of this religious Settlement.*

WE ſhould do this, to keep us *humble*: by conſidering the Meanneſs of our Beginning as to Externals, and yet the Glory thereof as to Spirituals; which ſpiritual Glory is now ſo very much loſt in the Increaſe of temporal Comforts.

AGAIN, we ſhould make Reflections on our firſt Beginnings and Improvements, to ſtir up ourſelves to *give* GOD *the Glory* of his wonderful Works in the days of our Fathers, when he laid the Foundations of our Earth and ſtretched our Heavens over us; when he brought a Vine (as of old out of *Egypt*) and planted it here, and prepared Room for it, and cauſed it to take Root, to ſtand and grow and flouriſh, notwithſtanding all the Oppoſition made thereto by Men and Devils. "Thoſe Works belong to the *Hiſtory of Providence*, which GOD would have known and red of all Men".

AGAIN, We muſt make thoſe Reflections in order to encourage our *Faith* and *Hope* in GOD; who is ſtill the ſame powerful and gracious GOD as ever, loves all them that ſeek him, and loves the Poſterity of his People the more *for their Fathers ſake*, when they truly ſeek him.

IN a word, We ſhould make thoſe Reflections in order to *direct* and *quicken* ourſelves in ſeeking and ſerving our Fathers GOD.

SUCH Reflections may be *directive* to us by a View of the *Example* of our godly Progenitors, who have left us an admirable Pattern of Orthodoxy in Principles, Purity of Worſhip, Strictneſs of Diſcipline and Government in the Family, School, Church, and

and Common-wealth, virtuous Manners, modeſt Apparel, grave and uſeful Converſation.

And then ſuch Reflections will tend to *excite* in us a Care of *imitating* them; by a Senſe of the peculiar Obligations lying on us, as we are the near Deſcendents of ſuch holy Anceſtors, whoſe Names will be a Reproach to us, if we do not alſo inherit their Virtues; by a Senſe of the Bonds of the Covenant upon us, and of the Bonds of Gratitude we are under, both with relation to God and our Fathers; by a Senſe of the many Prayers they have put up for us, and of the ſolemn Charges they have left us, enforced by a very attractive Example, the Example of ſuch as we've the higheſt Reaſon to love and venerate the Memory of; all which will but ſerve to aggravate the Guilt of our Apoſtaſies, and will riſe up in Judgment againſt us, if we forſake the God of our Fathers: — In fine, by a Senſe of the Awefulneſs of our ſtanding in God's Vineyard, by the Conſideration that the Axe is laid to the root of the Trees, that every Plant which is not of God's planting, ſhall be rooted up, and every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit ſhall be cut down.

Thus we ſee, thoſe Reflections are many ways of uſeful Tendency to the Ends of Holineſs and the Chriſtian Life; which ſhould ſtrongly recommend them to our frequent and affectionate Entertainment.

Uſe II. Let *us alſo reflect ſeriouſly on our* preſent State, *and lay to heart the Apoſtaſies of this degenerate Day.*

Alass! Are we not become as an Oak, whoſe Leaf fadeth, and the Stock thereof is ready to die in the Ground! May not *Iſrael* be call'd an empty Vine; bringing forth fruit unto himſelf! How is the faithful City become an Harlot! The Silver become

become Droſs, and the moſt fine Gold changed! This is for a Lamentation, and ſhall be for a Lamentation.

May it not be complain'd, that Strangers having devour'd our Strength, grey Hairs are upon us! We are now become a very mixt Generation: and may I not add, in Conſequence thereof, a very apoſtate one! May there not juſtly be exhibited againſt us a Complaint in the Language of *Judg.* 2. 10. *And alſo all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there aroſe another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Iſrael.* Has not that Word been fulfilled in our Day? Act. 20. 30. *Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away diſciples after them.*

How many in this Land have early corrupted their Ways, and forſaken the Lord God of their Fathers! Have not ſome renounced the Principles of Truth, and others the Rules of Practice, in the Worſhip of God, in the Diſcipline of his Houſe &c. which a humble ſearch into the holy Scriptures brought their pious Anceſtors to an Acquaintance with and Profeſſion of! Have not many renounced the Covenant of their Fathers, and become Enemies to the Work of God in this Plantation, as a Plantation for the Purpoſes of Religion!

And among thoſe who profeſs in general an Adherence to the Cauſe of God, which brought our Forefathers over to *New-England*, how many are there who practically pour Contempt upon it, by a Coldneſs in the Defence of it, and by Lives diſagreable to it!

Sure I am, we have Reaſon to take Shame to our ſelves; all of us, Magiſtrates, Miniſters, and People. We have many Defects, Neglects, and Miſcarriages to bewail; by which our Profeſſion has been ſtained, the Goſpel hinder'd, and the Flouriſhin

riſhing of Religion obſtructed. Alaſs! If we compare ourſelves with our Forefathers (and this let us often do, to humble and quicken ourſelves) how vaſtly ſhort do we come of their bright Example! It ſadly appears, "They had better Heads, "better Hearts, and better Management than we. "We want their Capacity, their Character, and "their Conduct very much: and therefore no "Wonder, if we likewiſe want their Succeſs. "Alaſs! we want their eminent Gifts and Graces. "We want their ardent Love to God, his Truths "and Ways. We want their peaceable healing "Spirit. We want their diſintereſted Humility "and Self-denial. We want their generous Con-"tempt of this *preſent World*: We want their ſtrong "Faith and affecting Views of *another*. And how "many Defects are there in the manner of our "Conduct! In the Serioufneſs of our Deportment; "the Prudence, the Faithfulneſs, the Diligence, "the Application and Zeal of our Management, in Affairs ſpiritual and moral.

In a word, we want very much the Spirit of Prayer, religious Conference, brotherly Watch, and Communion of Saints; the Family-Government, the Church-Diſcipline, the exemplary Sanctification of the Lord's Day, the Value for Goſpel-Liberties, and Affection to the Houſe and Ordinances of God, the Zeal for Reformation, — which ſo diſtinguiſh'd our pious Anceſtors. We pretend to excel them in a *catholick Spirit*, as 'tis call'd, and to entertain more generous Principles than they: but alaſs have we not very much loſt our Zeal for the great Subſtantials of Religion, as well as for peculiar Modalities! And is it not to be fear'd, that many under the glorious Mask of Chriſtian Charity hide a cold Indifference to all Religion! O let us ſee and realiſe the Degeneracies of the preſent Day: that there may be no Occaſion for a Rebuke of our Stu-

plidity, That *gray Hairs are ſprinkled upon us, and we know it not.* Let us be humbly ſenſible of our manifold Deficiencies, and lament all our Faults and Follies; our Abuſes of Proſperity and Liberty, our Pride and Senſuality, our Impieties againſt God and Immoralities againſt Men, our Hypocriſies, and Envies, and evil ſpeakings, and falſe Dealings:—— Which our Sins do receive the higheſt Aggravations poſſible, from that peculiar Profeſſion we have made of Religion, from that rich Abundance of ſacred Opportunities and ſpiritual Proviſions for our Souls, and that glorious Shine of Goſpel-Light, we have ſo long enjoy'd.

O that we may have Wiſdom to conſider theſe Things, and to repent in time, that ſo Iniquity may not be our Ruine! That's the Voice of Heaven to us, Jer. 6. 8. *Be thou inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt my Soul depart from thee.* The Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſpeaks to us, as he did to the Church of *Epheſus*, Rev. 2. 4, 5. *Nevertheleſs, I have ſomewhat againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the firſt works; or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent.* Let us ſolemnly conſider this Reproof. O that it may come with a powerful Impreſſion upon our Hearts, and produce agreable Effects in our Lives! That *New-England*, which is in danger this day to be loſt in *New-England* (as one expreſſes it) may not be bury'd in its own Ruines, and that *Boſton* may not (in ſpiritual regards, as once in temporal) have the reproachful Name of *Loſt Town* beſtow'd upon it.

But now to conclude,

Uſe III. Let *us all have a holy Concern upon our Minds, as we would have the Lord Jehovah to be* New-England's *Saviour, that we may anſwer his juſt*

Expectations

Expectations from us, and be yet a Tree of Righteouſneſs, bearing Fruit to his Glory.

We have Reaſon to admire the Divine Patience towards a ſinning People, That we have not long ſince been cut down as Cumberers of the Ground, but enjoy as yet a Standing in God's Vineyard. It is of the Mercy of the Lord, we are not conſum'd. O that the ſparing Goodneſs of God may lead us to Repentance! Let us adore the Grace and Power of Chriſt in continuing us a People yet before him; that the Root is not dried up from beneath, nor the Branches cut off from above; but there's yet Life in the Root, and ſtill *from Him is our Fruit found.* ‡

We are weak indeed this day, by the plucking ſo many Corner-Stones out of our Walls, and by the frowning Aſpects of Providence in other Regards. But ſtill let us not give way to unbelieving Thoughts and Diſcouragements, as if the Lord meant to utterly caſt us off. I truſt the Lord Jeſus Chriſt has yet a precious Intereſt among us, which he will not abandon. We ſee ſome Tokens that the Spirit of Chriſt remaineth among us. There's ſtill a Remnant of praying Saints and righteous Ones; ſuch as are of the ſame excellent Principles and

‡ It is worthy a particular Notice, the *Diſtinction* which our gracious Head and Lord has put upon *theſe Churches*, in continuing them for ſo long a Tract of Time on their original Foundations; keeping them in poſſeſſion of the ſame Scriptural Principles, Modes of Worſhip, Government & Order (with ſo much of *Purity* and *Liberty*) which our Forefathers profeſs'd and practis'd, and maintaining vital Godlineſs among Profeſſors ſo conſpicuouſly in a Number of Inſtances, from Generation to Generation. This is one of the *diſtinguiſhing* Glories of *New-England.* For very few Places in the World, where the Goſpel at any time has been planted, have continu'd the ſpace of one HUNDRED Years, without either a ſad *Diſſipation*, or a wretched *Depravation* of their Church-State; Such as through the Patience and Grace of God our Saviour, theſe Churches remain yet happily preſerv'd from.

and of the ſame excellent Tempers, that our holy Fathers were under the Dominion of ; Men, who ſtand in the Gap, Repairers of Breaches, and Reſtorers of Paths to dwell in. And then the threatning Clouds, which gather over us ſo thick and faſt in theſe ſhaking Times, they may be meant unto Good ; to humble and reform and do us Good in the Iſſue. Wherefore lift up the Hands that hang down, and ſtrengthen the feeble Knees.

Let us encourage our ſelves in the Lord, who by his Power created the World out of Nothing, who brought up *Iſrael* out of Egyptian Bondage, and who form'd and rais'd this his People from low Beginnings. With him is the Reſidue of the Spirit. He *hath* been mindful of us, and he *will* bleſs us : He will bleſs the Houſe of *Iſrael*, He will bleſs the Houſe of *Aaron*. Is it not an applicable Encouragement to *New-England*, that in Iſa. 66. 5. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word : Your brethren that hated you, that caſt you out for my name's ſake, ſaid, Let the Lord be glorified : but he ſhall appear to your joy, and they ſhall be aſhamed.*

Let us be ſollicitous to do all we can to ſecure the Continuance of the gracious Preſence of God among us. To this end, let us be concern'd to get every provoking Evil reform'd : let us be inquiſitive into the Cauſes of the preſent decay of Piety, and Unſucceſsfulneſs of the Goſpel ; labour to repair all our Defects, rectify all our Miſmanagements, and retrieve our Characters. Let us unite all our Endeavours, Cares, and Prayers, for the Recovery of languiſhing Religion, for the building up Chriſt's Kingdom, and carrying on the Work of the Lord, that we may ſee the Return of good Days. That's the Call of Chriſt to his People here, Rev. 3. 2, 3. *Be watchful, and ſtrengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die : for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou haſt received*

ceived and heard, and hold fast, and repent. And as in ver. 11. *Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.* He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the Churches.

Let us often recollect the Errand of our Forefathers into this Land, and purſue that great Intereſt, which brought them hither, when it was a Land not ſown, an inhoſpitable Wilderneſs, where (as they were wont to ſay) they eſteem'd—*brown Bread and the Goſpel good Fair.* Let us be mindful of the holy Covenant, wherein they have bound us to be the Lord's, and teach it our Children, who ſhall tell it to the Generation to come, that they alſo may ſet their Hope in the Lord, and that our little Ones may know the Covenant-Care and Faithfulfulneſs of the God of Iſrael, under whoſe Wings their Forefathers came hither to dwell in Safety. Let us attend to the Words of *David*'s dying Charge to the Rulers and People of *Iſrael*, 1 Chron. 28. 8. *Now therefore in the ſight of all Iſrael the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God, keep and ſeek for all the commandments of the Lord your God: that ye may poſſeſs this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever.*

Let us imitate our godly Anceſtors in the wiſe Methods and indefatigable Pains they took for the Security & Advancement of the Kingdom of Chriſt in *New-England.* Let us cheriſh the ſame excellent Spirit and Principles, which were ſo much their Diſtinction & Glory. Let us be earneſt at the Throne of Grace for a more plentiful Effuſion of the Holy Spirit, in order to a happy Revival of the Work of God; that we may hear many inquiring the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, and that true and effectual Converſions may be more frequently ſeen among us. We are propheſying as in the midſt of a Valley full of Bones, dead Men's Bones, very dry;

dry: But if God cauſe Breath to enter into them, they ſhall live, and renew their Strength, and the dry Bones ſhall flouriſh like an Herb. O that we might ſee it, and our Heart ſhall rejoyce! May this ancient Church be like a Tree that ſpreadeth out her Roots by the River, whoſe leaf withereth not, neither ceaſeth ſhe from yielding Fruit. May this Town be as a water'd Garden, that ſeeth not when Heat cometh, abounding with Fruits of Righteouſneſs: and let our Beloved come into his Garden, and eat of his pleaſant Fruits! May Salvation be nigh to us, and Glory dwell in our Land! Return, O Lord, for thy ſervants ſake, the tribes of thine inheritance: The people of thy holineſs have poſſeſſed it but a little while. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our Fathers; and let theſe my words, wherewith I have made Supplication before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night, that he may maintain the Cauſe of his People at all times as the matter ſhall require; that all the People of the Earth may know that the Lord he is God, the God of *Iſrael*, and our God, our Fathers God, and the God of our Children. And let us all now agree in making that Reſolution, *Iſa.* 62. 1. *For Zion's ſake will I not hold my peace, and for* Jeruſalem's *ſake I will not reſt, until the righteouſneſs thereof go forth as brightneſs, and the Salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*

6 AP 53

AMEN.

N. B. Pag. 12. lin. 1. read — a Number of the original Settlers